

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FOR SHERMAN

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: BACKGROUND BRIEFING OF ISRAELI CORRESPONDENTS IN
WASHINGTON BY U.S. SENIOR OFFICIAL.

REF: STATE 083799

1. ISRAELI NEWS MEDIA COVERED BRIEFING QUITE SIMILARLY.
T.V., RADIO AND PAPERS ACCORDED IT PRIME SPACE. SOURCE NEVER
MENTIONED BY NAME. MEDIA STRESSED THAT IT WAS THE
ISRAELIS WHO REQUESTED THE BRIEFING, AND THAT THE SOURCE WAS
"RELUCTANT" TO GIVE IT, LEST IT BE SEEN AS ANPR "PRESSURE
TO SPEND UP ISRAEL'S DECISION MAKING PROCESS."
MAARIV'S DISSENCHIK CALLED BRIEFING "A REVIEW OF THE PEACEMAKING
PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

2. WITH HEADLINE, "U.S. NOT COMMITTED TO REFERENDUM IN
W.BANK," POST'S BLITZER LISTS ON PAGE ONE THE POINTS
MADE BY THE "AMERICAN OFFICIAL:" "THE U.S. IS NOT NECESSARILY
WEDDED ONLY TO THE CONCEPT OF A PLEBESCITE OR REFERENDUM
FOR THE PALESTINIAN ARABS... BUT WASHINGTON BELIEVES
THAT AN ULTIMATE RESOLUTION OF THE QUESTION IS 'INCONCEIVABLE'
WITHOUT PROMISING THE POPULATION A VOICE IN DECISIONS AFFECTING
THEIR OWN FUTURE... SUCH A RESOLUTION, THE U.S. CURRENTLY
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BELIEVES, IS SOME SORT OF LIMITED CHOICE 'VOTE' FOR THE
PALESTINIANS... THE U.S. MAY COME FORWARD, "AT SOME POINT IN THE
NEGOTIATING PROCESS,' WITH A SPECIFIC PLAN AND PROPOSALS
TO 'BRIDGE THE GAP WHEN WE THINK IT WILL BE HELPFUL'...
THE U.S. WANTS ISRAEL TO PUT A FREEZE ON ALL 'SETTLEMENT
ACTIVITY' IN SINAI, THE GOLAN AND WEST BANK AND GAZA (BUT) THE
U.S. HAS NEVER TOLD ISRAEL TO DISMANTLE EXISTING SETTLEMENTS...

EGYPT HAS NOT YET, BUT WOULD PROBABLY COME AROUND TO, ACCEPT ALL THE PRINCIPLES BUT FORWARD BY THE U.S., INCLUDING THE ASWAN FORMULATION... THE PLO CANNOT BE A PARTNER TO NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE OF ITS CALL FOR ISRAEL DESTRUCTION..."

3. IDO DISSENCHIK'S STORY IN MAARIV (PAGE 2) IS TITLED: "WEIZMAN'S VISIT IN EGYPT 'A VERY POSITIVE STEP'", IN ADDITION TO ABOVE, DISSENCHIK MAKES FOLLOWING POINTS, ALL REPORTED AS STEMMING FROM OFFICIAL BRIEFING: "THE U.S. IS AWAITING ISRAEL'S REPLY TO THE TENTATIVE IDEAS PRESIDENT CARTER PUT TO PREMIER BEGIN... FONMIN DAYAN MAY BRING THOSE ANSWERS WHEN HE COMES TO WASHINGTON... EVEN IF ISRAEL ACCEPTED THE ASWAN FORMULA AND THE PRINCIPLE OF THE APPLICABILITY OF 242 TO ALL FRONTS, THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES MAY ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES, BECAUSE EGYPT HAS NOT YET GIVEN UP ON ITS DEMANDS FOR TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND SELF-DTERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS... PRESIDENT CARTER HAD TALKED WITH PM BEGIN ABOUT ISSUES GOING BEYOND THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES... BUT HIS IDEAS ARE NOT NECESSARILY FINAL BECAUSE 'WE ARE STILL FEELING OUR WAY AROUND'... THE U.S. DOES NOT ACCEPT EGYPT'S INSISTENCE ON TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, NOT EVEN WITH RESPECT TO SINAI, BUT THIS HAS NOW BECOME AN ACADEMIC QUESTION, ONCE ISRAEL HAS OFFERED A TOTAL PULL-BACK IN THIS SECTOR... PM BEGIN'S IDEAS ON THE WEST BANK DIFFER FROM THOSE PROPOSED BY THE U.S. IN THAT THEY DEAL WITH THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE

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BUT NOT WITH THE FUTURE OF THE LAND... THE U.S. HAS NOT DISCUSSED WITH ARAB COUNTRIES THE POSSIBILITY OF SETTLING ARAB REFUGEES IN THESE COUNTRIES..." DISSENCHIK NOTES THAT "ALTHOUGH THE OFFICIAL DENIED THAT THE ARMS PACKAGE DEAL BREAKS ANY U.S. COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL, HE COULD NOT GIVE ANY PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR LINKING TOGETHER THE ARMS SUPPLY TO ISRAEL AND OTHER COUNTRIES."

4. NISSIM KIVITY USES A "HINT" BY THE U.S. OFFICIAL, THAT "BEGIN WOULD PERHAPS BE INVITED TO TALKS IN WASHINGTON AT THE END OF NEXT MONTH," AS HEADLINE FOR HIS PAGE 2 REPORT. KIVITY ALSO HAS OFFICIAL DENYING A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL. KIVITY FURTHER CITES OFFICIAL AS HAVING SAID THAT: "PRESIDENT CARTER ANTICIPATES THAT THE FORMULA OF 'NO TOTAL WITHDRAWAL, NO INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE' WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO EGYPT... OFFICIAL DENIED THAT THE USG HAS PROPOSED MOVING ISRAELI BORDER TO THE EAST IN THE TUL-KAREM AREA. 'THE AMERICANS DRAW NO LINES,' HE SAID."

5. THE FRONT PAGE REPORT IN HA'ARETZ, BY YOEL MARCUS, IS HEADLINED: "SENIOR U.S. OFFICIAL SAYS WASHINGTON DOES NOT INSIST ON REFERENDUM IN JUDAEA AND SAMARIA."

OFFICIAL ALSO SAID BY MARCUS TO HAVE NOTED "THE AMBIGUITY OF 242 ON THE SIZE OF THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL," AND THE "DILEMA" POSTED BY THE DIFFICULTY TO PREVENT THE PALESTINIANS FROM ESTABLISHING A STATE OF THEIR OWN AT THE END OF THE FIVE-YEAR INTERIM PERIOD. MARCUS, TOO, REPORTS THAT THE OFFICIAL DENIED EXISTENCE OF U.S.- ISRAEL CONFRONTATION OR U.S. INSISTENCE THAT EXISTING SETTLEMENTS BE DISMANTLED. AS TO A PALESTINIAN STATE, MARCUS SAYS THAT THE OFFICIAL FAILED TO SHOW" HOW THIS CAN BE PREVENTED IF THEY ARE ALLOWED A REFERENDUM. ACCORDING TO WRITER, " THE OFFICIAL DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE U.S. WOULD IN THE FUTURE PROPOSE A PLAN OF ITS OWN." LEWIS

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